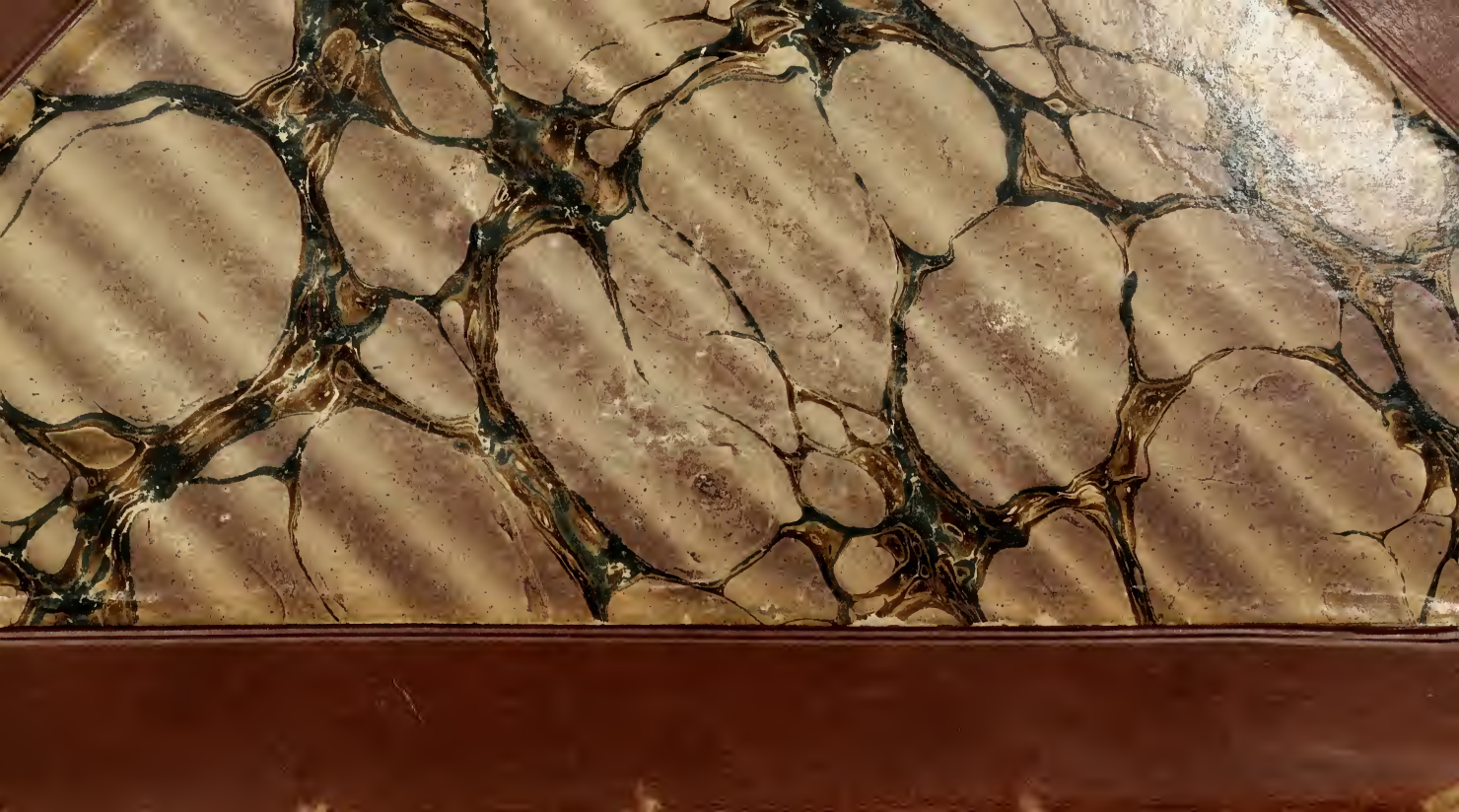

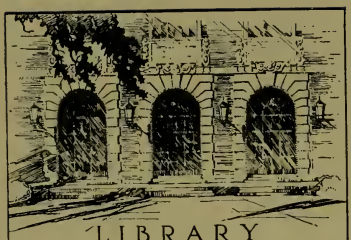

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CHURCH REFORM:

THE INEXPEDIENCY OF ATTEMPTING IT AT THE PRESENT TIME.

A PAPER,

read at a Meeting, summoned and presided over by the Lord Bishop of Norwich, of the Archdeacons of that Diocese, together with the Residentiary and Honorary Canons of Norwich Cathedral.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.C.L., D.D.,

DEAN OF NORWICH.

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MDCCCLXXXVI.

TO THE REVEREND

ROBERT EDEN, M.A.,

HONORARY CANON OF NORWICH,

WHO REQUESTED ITS PUBLICATION,

THIS PAPER

IS INSCRIBED WITH

SENTIMENTS OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE.

To the Reverend Robert Eden, M.A., Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral.

Deanery, Norwich, Feb. 12th, 1886.

My Dear Mr. Eden,

I have two reasons for publishing the enclosed paper. One is, your special request that I should do so, though in saying this I ought to add that you did not hear the paper, and have not yet read it, and that therefore I have no right to assume your concurrence in its strong expressions, or in anything more than the general line which is taken in it. The second reason is, that, in compliance with a recommendation made to him by a very numerous and influential body of his Clergy, our Bishop has summoned a special meeting of the Diocesan Conference in Easter Week to consider the subject of Church Reform. With great deference to the judgment, both of the Bishop, and of the many eminent men who have moved him to take this step, I do not think the step a judicious one, and fear that such discussions at the present season may do harm, as tending to call attention to blots in our system at a time when "the "powers that be" can hardly be thought to be favourably disposed towards the Church. I shall therefore absent myself from the Conference; but I suppose that, as Dean of the Cathedral Church, I ought to state boldly and fearlessly my views on a "burning "question" of the day, (alas that it should ever have been kindled!); and I think also that a considerable minority of the Clergy of this Diocese, of whom I have the best reason to know that (in the main) they concur with my views of Church Reform, have a right to my express and public support. And this I can give them, with comparatively little trouble to myself, by publishing the Paper I was called upon to read at the Bishop's Palace, omitting only those parts which, though appropriate enough at a confidential meeting of Brethren, are not suitable for publication.

I should add that I was sorry to find that I had mistaken the Bishop's meaning in one clause of the thesis which he gave us to speak upon. He explained that by "Church Councils" he did *not* mean "Parochial Councils," but such Councils as Convocation is now, or as it is proposed to make it. Had I understood this, I should have omitted that part of this paper which deals with the subject of Parochial Councils; but, now that I am about to give the paper a general circulation, I deliberately retain that part of it which has reference to one of the main (so called) Reforms, which have been proposed in our present system.

I beg to acknowledge my obligations to you for the encouragement which, while moving in this matter, I have derived from my correspondence with you—now nearly the oldest, I think, of our Honorary Canons, and one whose long experience of Church movements will make your judgment on such a subject universally deferred to.

I remain, my dear Mr. Eden,

Yours very truly,

E. MEYRICK GOULBURN.

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THE QUESTION, TO WHICH ANSWERS WERE INVITED, WAS AS FOLLOWS :—*Is it desirable at the present time to attempt Reform in all, or any, of the following matters;—Convocation, its constitution and procedure;—The Laity, their rights and duties in Church Councils and Legislation;—Church Patronage, the sale of advowsons and presentations?—If so, in what order, and in what direction should they be dealt with; and is it desirable to apply to Parliament to give legal force to such Reforms?*

IN a paper, the drift of which is strongly to deprecate any attempt at general Church Reform at the present crisis, it will be proper to say at the outset, in order to guard against misunderstanding, that I by no means object to Church Reform under favourable circumstances, in due season, and let me add (for that is a point which I wish to press further on) in its natural and orderly developement. I quite see its principle, and I should be glad and thankful to see the principle acted upon in several details and particulars of the Church system. The principle of Church Reform is that of all Reform. The Church is a Society, Divine in her origin and constitution, no doubt, heavenly in her extraction, but as composed of men who sojourn on the earth, subject to the conditions to which all human societies are subject. Now to the welfare

and healthy working of every society it is essential that two principles should be in operation within it,—the principle of progress, and the principle of stability. To my own mind I simplify the idea by an illustration. The orderly revolution of a planet round the sun is secured by the action upon it of two forces, one the primary impulse of the Divine hand which projected it into space, the other the centripetal force by which it gravitates towards the sun, and thus is not allowed to deviate from its orbit. Without the primary impulse it would be drawn into the sun and consumed; without the centripetal force it would travel through space in the direction originally given to it, bound to no centre and observing no orbit. The principle of progress, of improvement, of adapting old Institutions to the times, and generally of managing things better and more wisely now than our forefathers did,—this is the primary impulse, in the absence of which no Society can possibly lead a healthy life. But in order to the well-being of the body politic there must also be a steadying force, a principle of stability, which shall, as it were, bind the society to its centre, and make its progress methodical and regular, not a mere unrestrained and eccentric movement. In the inspired history of the Church, which is given us in the Acts of the Apostles, we see both principles in operation. The book is full of Church movement on the one hand; for in the childhood of the Church her vitality was strong. There is the appointment of the Seven Deacons, a new Church Order, to meet the unforeseen emergency which had arisen in the Jerusalem Church. There is the ruling of the first General Council, as to how far the ceremonial Law was to be considered obligatory upon the Gentiles. And, greatest of all movements, there is the admission of

the Gentiles to all the blessings and privileges of the Christian Covenant, and the providential indication of this admission given by St. Paul's being brought to Rome, the then mistress of the world, and the seat and source of civilization. Yet, on the other hand, there was a principle of stability in that infant Church, and a centre, to which its active movements were tied. There was the College of the Apostles, stationary during the earlier part of the period to which disputes might be referred for settlement; — "they were all "scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa "and Samaria, *except the apostles*"; "they determined "that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of "them, should go up to Jerusalem *unto the apostles* "and elders about this question." And there was the Faith, the essential articles of which there is every reason to think were very early formulated into a creed, indications of which are found in such passages as these,—"that form of doctrine which "was delivered you;" "hold fast the form of "sound words, which thou hast heard of me;" "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy "trust;" "That good thing which was committed "unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth "in us." And when the Apostles fell asleep, they left behind them, to be a centre of reference and a principle of stability to the Church, first, their inspired writings, in which they had embodied their oral teaching, and secondly, the men upon whom they had devolved their great commission, with instructions to hand it on to the latest generations:— "And the things which thou hast heard of me "among many witnesses, the same commit thou to "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others "also."

Having said thus much by way of shutting out

the conclusion, which else might perhaps be drawn from what I am about to say, that I desire to keep things just as they are, and never to see any alteration of our present system, I will now give a categorical answer to your Lordship's first question; "Is it desirable at the present time to attempt "Reform in all or any of the following matters; "Convocation, its constitution and procedure; the "Laity, their rights and duties in Church councils "and legislation; Church Patronage, the sale of "advowsons and presentations?" Without a moment's hesitation, and with as strong an emphasis as I can lay upon the negative, I reply; "At the present time *most undesirable*." Undesirable, first, from external circumstances; and, secondly, from the state of mind into which these external circumstances have a tendency to throw, and into which it is clear that they have thrown, many members of the Church.

First, from external circumstances. I believe that in none of the three matters mentioned by your Lordship could any very telling or trenchant change be made, without the sanction of Parliament. Certainly any question affecting the rights of property,—a proposal for example, to restrict those rights in the case of advowsons and presentations, (a most proper proposal, in my own view, and one which I should gladly see carried into effect),—such a proposal, such a question, cannot possibly be dealt with except under the powers given by an Act of Parliament.—Again, to give the Laity any rights in connexion with the Church, over and above those which they at present enjoy as Churchwardens or in other recognised positions (and without such rights the demands now being made on all hands for Church Reform cannot be satisfied—Mr. Main Walrond's Address to the

Archbishops expressly speaks of "the establishment "of Parochial Councils with *well defined statutory* "*powers*, as being of primary importance"),—would of course necessitate an appeal to Parliament; for how can a statutory power be given except by a statute of the Realm?—As regards Convocation, your Lordship knows much better than I how far it may be at present within the power of the Archbishop of Canterbury to extend or re-arrange the clerical constituency, so as to make it a fairer and more adequate representation of the Parochial Clergy than it is at present, or to alter the procedure of it, and sweep away some of those cumbrous formalities by which business is so often impeded. But such a change in the constitution of Convocation as would give laymen a seat and a vote in the Sacred Synod of the Church of England, which I doubt not is what some of the signatories of Mr. Main Walrond's Address would wish to see, could not possibly be effected without Parliament; for Convocation is a part of the constitution of the realm; and so organic a change in a part of the constitution surely would demand that *Deus ex machinâ*,—an Act. Now, I would respectfully ask those who advocate our immediately attempting Reform, whether they think that the present Parliament, when these weighty affairs are placed by Churchmen in its hands, is likely to determine them in a way favourable to the Church, or in such a way as the great majority of Churchmen would wish,—whether, moreover, when once such a Parliament has tasted of Church legislation, it may not, like the tiger tasting blood, acquire such a relish for it, that it shall not leave off until it has torn—not indeed the Church, but the Church Establishment—in pieces.

My Lord, the Fables of Phædrus, at which we drudged in boyhood as an exercise in Latinity, are

often seen by us in maturer age to convey precious lessons of moral wisdom. And I am reminded by these clamours for Church Reform, and "statutory "powers" to give effect to it, of what Phædrus tells us of the horse and the boar,—how, when the boar had fouled a stream, at which the horse was wont to drink, by wallowing in it, the latter, in disgust at the nuisance, besought a man to help him, who immediately jumping on his back, killed the boar with darts, which from that seat of vantage he hurled at him. So far, so good; the boar was killed, and could foul the stream no more. But alas! poor horse! in his attempt to escape from a nuisance he had forfeited his independence. He was bitted, bridled, spurred, whipped, harnessed, and instead of scampering in freedom over the meadows, was made to go whither his rider listed, and to submit to whatever burdens his master chose to saddle him with. My Lord, when I contemplate these passionate appeals for instantaneous Church Reform, for the immediate sweeping away of abuses, which at all events are endurable, and not at all inconsistent with the Church's vitality, nor impediments to her doing good, I am inclined to say of Phædrus's fable in the words of an Apostle,—"which things are an allegory." True; the permission which our present system gives to a godless patron (he must be godless to do it) to make money by the sale of a cure of souls—souls for which Christ died—instead of appointing to it the fittest clerk he can find for the execution of its spiritual duties; the making it impossible for a Bishop to refuse institution to a notoriously disqualified clerk, except at heavy costs in defending an action of *Quare impedit* in a civil court, or a *duplex querela* in the Archbishop's court; these things and the like are no doubt not as they should be; they are a

fouling of the stream of Church life by the wallowing of the boar, that is by the secularity and ungodliness of some of the Church's members; but, distressing and deplorable as they are, it would be a shortsighted wisdom indeed to ask Parliament to jump upon our backs to put an end to them, especially when there is some reason to apprehend that Parliament itself may be ridden in its turn by persons avowedly hostile to the Church and all connected with it. The less inducement we hold out to such riders to mount, the more likely we are, it appears to me, with God's blessing, to maintain our independence.

And let me say here, as your Lordship has asked us about "the rights and duties of the Laity "in Church councils and legislation," that I might give Phædrus's Fable another application to the excessive unwisdom of giving to the Laity by means of Parochial Councils "statutory powers" of administering the parish in conjunction with the Clergyman, of determining (I suppose) the number of the services, the measure of the ritual, the charities which shall be advocated, the hymns which shall be used, and all those matters which are usually left to the clergyman's discretion, either with or without the concurrence of the Bishop. Doubtless it is charming in theory, and as a speculation, to contemplate the sympathy and co-operation of the Laity,—nay, more than that, it is most helpful and cheering in practice to enjoy that co-operation, when, as is the case in hundreds of parishes, their aid has been voluntarily tendered, and thankfully accepted; but to ask for a regular "parochial council with well-defined statutory "powers" is just to invite a rider to mount us who, when he is once mounted, will determine to have his own way, and never let us have ours. In

country parishes he will be thoroughly ignorant of all that it behoves a Church administrator to know, ignorant of the first principles of the Church system and Church discipline, ignorant of Church history, ignorant of the Prayer Book, and too often of the Bible. In town parishes, he may perhaps be educated and acute, but he will be fussy, pragmatical, managing, cantankerous. The experience of a single man is of course limited, and possibly the cause of failure may have been in myself, who may not have had the tact and adroitness necessary for the management of such a body; but certainly the experience which I had in a London Parish of something of the nature of a Parochial Council (the bequest of my excellent predecessor) was not happy. I found the Institution weak and somewhat irritating, powerless for good, and rather a thorn in my side. Yet let it not be thought that I was on other than the most cordial terms with my Laity. None but the most ill-conditioned of clergymen could have been on bad terms with them. They worked with me and for me in a hundred ways; and I believe there never was a body of Laity more generous to their pastor, more considerate of his trials and responsibilities, and above all more indulgent to his many failures.

But I said that not only external circumstances make it most undesirable at the present time to attempt Reform; but also *that the state of mind into which these external circumstances have a tendency to throw, and as a patent fact have thrown, a large number of Churchmen, is as unsuitable a state of mind as can be conceived for the very critical and hazardous operations which it is proposed to conduct.* For the conduct of a healthy Reform in any one of the particular departments which have been represented as needing it, it would be essential to maintain

that calm leisurely judicial frame of mind, which looks carefully on all sides of a question, balances advantages and disadvantages, and proceeds upon the principle of common sense, that what exists at present should not be disturbed, unless there is good reason for thinking that what is proposed to supersede it will have more advantages and fewer drawbacks. But what is the actual state of mind which the two Addresses that have been put forth on the subject—the Cambridge Address and that of Mr. Main Walrond—betray in those who draw them up, and rush in shoals to sign them? Nothing less than a spirit of miserable, undignified panic, a spirit wanting entirely in prudent foresight, wanting in courage, and wanting in that which is the great secret and source of courage,—faith. I will give a voice to this spirit, wherewith to express itself in very plain English. "The political "atmosphere is heavily charged with Disestablish- "ment and Disendowment, averted though they "may have been for a brief season. With the "present balance of parties in the House of "Commons Mr. Gladstone, if his life is spared, "must speedily take the reins of Government once "more;* and, whatever his own convictions may "be on the question, will certainly yield to the "pressure put upon him by Messrs. Bright and "Chamberlain, who have made no secret at all of "what their convictions are. Let us put our house "in order while we may. Let us fall on our knees, "and confess with a beautiful candour, and expose "to the eyes of all the world the weak points in our "system, and our earnest desire and endeavour to

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* The Paper was read on the 27th of January, before Mr. Gladstone had actually resumed the reins.

"have them altered, which earnest desire however "we never felt, and which endeavour we never "made, so long as we thought that Disestablishment "and Disendowment would never come within the "range of practical politics." Oh the desperate folly of such humiliation at such a time, as if our enemies were not keen-sighted enough to detect our real motive, and malignant enough to hate and despise us for it! Oh the despicable poltroonery of such a tone, as if we were conscious of so many blemishes in our dear Mother Church that we are afraid to stand up for her as she is, and must speak of her, of whose womb we were born unto God, at whose breasts we were fed with the Word and Sacraments, in whose lap we were reared, in a cringing, whining, apologetic tone! Oh the distrustfulness and secret infidelity of the state of mind revealed in these addresses, as if the Lord of the Church were not in and with the Church, and could not make the storm to cease, that threatens to engulf her, with a single "Peace, be still," issuing from His gracious lips! And to what end this policy so foolish, so cowardly, so faithless? Simply with the object of averting, if it may be, Disestablishment and Disendowment,—to give our enemies as little ground as may be for subjecting the Church to those catastrophes. My Lord, evil and pernicious as in my judgment Disestablishment and Disendowment would be, there might be an infinitely worse and more pernicious evil to which the Church might be subjected though it could only be by her own treachery to her first principles; and that evil I find not obscurely pointed at in the "Manifesto" on Church Reform, first published in "the Standard," which is signed by many "conforming and non-conforming Ministers" (so they style themselves) among the latter being Mr. Vance Smith and another less well

known Unitarian Minister, and the editor of "the "Unitarian Herald." My Lord, if I were required to characterize the Cambridge Address, Mr. Main Walrond's Address, and the Latitudinarian Manifesto,* each by a word apiece, I should use the words, "Weak," "Mischievous," "Deadly." Yet the deadliness of this last is not apparent on the surface; when I read it through the first time, I was taken with its seeming to manifest a real repugnance to Disestablishment and Disendowment, and (simpleton that I was) I said to myself, "This "sounds very well, and promises very fair." But a moment's reflexion made me feel the scratch of the cat's claws beneath the velvet of the cat's coat, and amidst the soft purring of the cat's interior, and I bethought me of those words of Holy Scripture predictive of the traitor's greeting and kiss; "The "words of his mouth were softer than butter, having "war in his heart: his words were smoother than "oil, and yet be they very swords." For, my Lord, I observed that the avowed object of these conforming and non-conforming Ministers is to "nationalise" the Church of England by so "widening the basis "of the Church as to include as far as possible the "entire Christian thought and life of the nation." The basis of the Church, my Lord, is the Faith once delivered to the Saints, upon which she is built, the leading feature of which Faith is a right belief in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His perfect Deity as well as His perfect Humanity;—and therefore the only meaning I can attach to a demand for widening the basis of the Church, coming from Unitarian Ministers, is that the

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* It is thought that it might be convenient to exhibit a copy of the three Addresses *in extenso* in the Appendix, which see.

distinctive doctrine of the Incarnation, and of course also the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, which is bound up inextricably with the doctrine of the Incarnation, are to be dropped, and that the bond of union which cements the Church is to be no longer the acknowledgment and worship of a common Redeemer, confessed by all to be God and man, but, as I suppose, the precept given by Christ of love towards God and man, which precept however it is impossible to fulfil except in the strength and under the light of that acknowledgment. My Lord, I say advisedly, and not advisedly only, but with my whole heart and soul, Come Disestablishment and Disendowment twenty thousand times over rather than that the Church should allow the deposit of the Faith to be impaired by one iota, and her dear Lord to be dishonoured by the denial of His Divinity. Yes! to nationalise the Church at the expense of her Faith is to nationalise her at the expense of her life, (for indeed who knows not that her Faith is her life?); it is the best exemplification I have ever come across of the folly of clinging to bare existence at the sacrifice of every thing which makes existence desirable,—the folly which even a heathen satirist could discern and deprecate;

> "Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,
> Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas."

And yet, much as I abhor and deprecate the proposals of these conforming and non-conforming Ministers, I am grateful to them for one thing. By bringing the senseless clamour for Church Reform to a head, by giving it a culminating point in this manifesto, they have shown whither it is tending, and what is the *animus* that really inspires it all. The object which it is driving at is the comprehension of all sects in one happy family, from which

dogma with all its hateful, dry, hard, angular, definitions shall be excluded for ever, and in virtue of which exclusion the so-called Church (it will be really a Church no longer) shall be made to include "the entire Christian thought and life of the nation." Comprehension forsooth! Have the signatories of this manifesto never read History? Have they never heard that in 1689 a legislative attempt was made to comprehend the *orthodox* Dissenters within the Church's pale (as for comprehending *Unitarians*, the idea would have shocked even the liberal Bishop Burnet, and the latitudinarian William of Orange), but fell through principally because, according to the testimony of Macaulay, *it was too late to make it*, and the divisions between the Church and the Sects had been hardened and stereotyped by a century's growth?* Are not these divisions more permanently stereotyped now? Does not the mere existence of the Liberation Society show how deep and impassable has become (most unhappily, I admit) the gulf between Dissent and the Church? No! when you have found out the specific for suppressing war between States, then may you hope to apply

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* "The truth is that the time for such a scheme" (as Comprehension) had gone by. If, a hundred years earlier, when the "division in the Protestant body was recent, Elizabeth had been so "wise as to abstain from requiring the observance of a few forms "which a large part of her subjects considered as Popish, she might "perhaps have averted those fearful calamities which, forty years "after her death, afflicted the Church. But the general tendency of "schism is to widen. * * * * * * * * * * * In the sixteenth century "Quakerism was unknown; and there was not in the whole realm a "single congregation of Independents or Baptists. At the time "of the Revolution, the Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, were "a majority of the dissenting body; and these sects could not be "gained over on any terms which the lowest of Low Churchmen "would have been willing to offer." [Macaulay's "History of "England from the Accession of James the Second" (London: 1855), Vol. III. Pp. 95, 96].

the specific to the analogous feuds which exist between different communions of Christians. Both war and schism are very evil and bitter things, scourges wherewith God visits men for their sins; but they are bound up with the present system of things, which, so long as it lasts, is God's ordinance; and until the Prince of Peace comes, no effort to get rid of them will meet with much success. Be it our consolation to know and believe that He *will* come, and that these great blessings,—peace between jarring States, peace between jarring Communions—will be the first fruits of His coming:—

"Down the dark future, thro' long generations,
"War's echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
"And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
"I hear once more the voice of Christ say, 'Peace.'"

My Lord, the question which these apprehensive cries for general Church Reform, evidently sent forth under the influence of a panic, lead me to put to myself is, whether I have faith in my Church,—*even taking her as she is, and with all her acknowledged blemishes*,—do I believe in her? Do I believe that in this country it is she who holds Christ's commission to tend His flock, and to feed it with the Word and Sacraments? I do. Do I believe that, on the whole, and on a general survey of her operations, (of course there are "dark places "of the earth" in the Church of England, as in all other Churches), she is really doing this good work among the English people, addressing herself to it strenuously, devotedly, and with all her heart and soul? I do. Do I believe that within living memory, within the last half century, all erratic movements and extravagances notwithstanding, the spiritual life within her has been wonderfully re-kindled, her devotion deepened, her energy and activity quadrupled, and the *sphere* of her activity

immensely enlarged? I do; with all my heart I do. Do I believe that the great majority of her Bishops are endowed with wisdom and piety; that among her sons she numbers many great doctors and divines, and even some who deserve the name of Confessors, like the late Bishop Patteson; that her laity, wherever they see the smallest indication of zeal and earnestness in their pastors, throng around them, look up to them, can never do enough for them, enthusiastically follow their lead, and even sometimes yield them a homage which is hardly good for them? I do; with all my heart I do. Then I am not afraid for her, whatever dangers seem to threaten her. Warned by the example of Uzzah, I will not rashly, precipitately, faithlessly, put forth my hand to steady the ark of God when the oxen stumble, as if forsooth there were not a mightier arm than mine protecting that ark. "God "is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be "removed: God shall help her, and that right "early;" "The Lord is King, be the people never "so impatient: he sitteth between the cherubims, "be the earth never so unquiet."

But there is one question of your Lordship's, to which I have as yet made no reply, and yet to which I must reply, if I am to make my answer an exhaustive one. We are asked, in case of Reform being "attempted" in certain specified points, "in "what order" these points should be dealt with. I believe we have to thank your Lordship for teaching us something by the question. To ask "in what "order" certain matters should be dealt with, is to imply that no attempt should be made to deal with them all at once. And this of itself I take to be a most wholesome lesson on the subject which is brought before us. The Cambridge Address specifies four points, Mr. Walrond's five, on which the signatories

hold Church Reform to be urgently required; and while neither of the Addresses explicitly states this, both leave the impression that all parts of the programme should be taken in hand at once. And this impression is confirmed by the opening paragraph of the Latitudinarian Manifesto, where we read that as "three centuries ago the Church of England "was reformed, to suit the needs of those times," so "to suit present needs there must be a fresh "Reformation." A Reformation, of course, if such were requisite, would demand that the whole area of Church life should be travelled over at once, and abuses in every department immediately rectified. The analogy, however, which the Manifesto points at, between what is needed now and what was done in the sixteenth century, is an utterly false and misleading one. *Reform* we may and do need in certain points, where long lapse of time, or the secularity of the Church's members, has introduced abuses and corruptions, but nothing at all parallel to the movement known as *the Reformation*, which indeed was rather the Reformation of Religion than the Reformation of the Church. And such Reforms as are needed must be taken up one at a time, as your Lordship's question implies, according, I should say, as the pressure of one or other of the abuses is generally felt and smarted under. Church Patronage has long been a scandal, which the Church's enemies have not been slow to cast in her teeth, and in defence of which even her best friends have never had any thing to say;—let it be the first point dealt with, when the time for Reform comes, and let all good Churchmen, whether in or out of Parliament, lend their efforts to put it on a satisfactory footing. When the evils of the present state of things as regards Patronage have been remedied, let the next most pressing point be taken up and similarly dealt

with. Reform, to be healthy, should be a growing process, prepared for by the formation of public opinion on a certain point, and not brought about till that opinion has been fully formed and finally matured; and as the public mind has never room enough for more than one subject at once, more than one reform should not be set on foot at the same time.

But are we to wait, I shall be asked, to initiate these Reforms, until the Church is restored to her self-possession, and until the panic and excitement engendered by the threats of Disestablishment have calmed down? Are we to do nothing to defend our Church till that time arrives? Nothing, I would say, in the way of attempted Legislation, or change enforced from without; but everything in the way of forming a moral sense in our own minds, and in the minds of our people, upon the blots which disfigure our system, and which we hope that Legislation will ere long obliterate. Form the public conscience, and Legislation will sooner or later follow as a matter of course. Leave the public conscience unformed, or give it but a weak and imperfect education on the questions at issue, and no change which you make from without will be a success. Powerful public interests may block your path; but sooner or later they will have to give way, if the great body of reasonable and thinking men have fully made up their minds that what is proposed to be done is right, and that to withhold it any longer would be wrong. It was so, remember, with slavery. Most powerful interests were enlisted in upholding slavery; indeed it was long before even religious men recognised it as being wrong, because the conscience on the subject had not then been formed in them; but nothing could stand before the moral force of the arguments brought to bear by Wilberforce and Clarkson, combined with the moral energy of their characters, and

when these great influences had worked a while and leavened the national mind, Slavery was swept away from the British Dominions by an Act of Parliament. Much the same may be said of duelling. Duelling, once so common, has (God be praised!) died a natural death among us. And what caused this death but the raising of the general standard of public opinion on the subject, a growing conviction in the minds of all thoughtful and serious men that nothing can justify the attempt to take away a fellow-creature's life for a few insulting words thrown out in a brawl over a wine cup? Why may not the same moral influences which put down slavery, which put down duelling, be brought to bear upon the scandals connected with Church Patronage, and the presentation to benefices of ungodly or heretical clerks? Why might not the sin of making money by a benefice, without the smallest regard to the character and qualifications of the priest, into whose hands the sale may throw it,—why might not the nearly allied sin of putting into a living the dull one of the family, because a livelihood is wanted for the dull one, and he could not get a livelihood so easily in any other profession, be sometimes faithfully censured from the pulpit, and inveighed against with all earnestness in private life, as actions quite unworthy of those who profess and call themselves Christians? Every such censure would contribute something to the formation of a sound public opinion on the subject, and thus would do something to terminate the existence of the evil which we all deplore. But apart from special efforts against special abuses, the general elevation of our own spiritual standard and that of our flocks, the elevation which it is always open to us to seek, and which, if we seek it cordially and faithfully, we shall not fail to find, will

bring on in due time, surely if slowly, the reformation of abuses. I am not sure that these clamours for Reform in the external circumstances of the Church may not be spiritually dangerous, as tending to distract our minds from this "one thing needful," the growth in grace and knowledge, of ourselves first, and through ourselves of our people. Thus writes to me a highly esteemed beneficed clergyman of this Diocese; "The worst of this Reform "movement is, in my opinion, that it is diverting "the minds of the clergy from Reforms which "would be really desirable, and for which no "Legislation is required—deeper spirituality, a "higher tone, less conformity to the world, better "reading and preaching, heartier services." I am inclined to agree with my correspondent. At all events, certain it is that the spiritual life does not find a congenial element in such excitements and controversies as these crude ill-digested projects of Reform are likely to lead to. It is a very sensitive plant, which flourishes rather in the shade, and which even in enthusiastic movements *about* Religion, movements well intended and well directed, by no means always thrives. And if I am required to find a text, which lays down the fundamental conditions of spirituality, while at the same time it exactly expresses the attitude of mind befitting good Churchmen at the present crisis, I should choose this;

"Thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of "Israel.....In quietness and in confidence "shall be your strength."

APPENDIX.

I. The Cambridge Address.

Extracted from *The Guardian* of Dec. 16th, 1885. (P. 1910).

"We, the undersigned resident members of the Senate of the University of Cambridge desire to lay respectfully before you the expression of our belief that the Church of England has long suffered serious injury from the postponement of necessary reforms, and of our earnest desire that advantage may be taken of the revival of public interest in ecclesiastical questions for the authoritative consideration of temperate measures of Church reform, in order that they may be carried into effect with the least possible delay.

"Certain definite evils affecting portions of the administration of the Church appear to us to need prompt correction. As examples may be given abuses connected with the sale of patronage, excessive inequalities or anomalies in the distribution of revenues, and difficulties in the way of the removal of criminous and incompetent clerks.

"But the reform which we believe to be most urgently needed is a more complete development of the constitution and government of the Church, central, diocesan, and parochial; and especially the admission of laymen of all classes, who are *bonâ fide* Churchmen, to a substantial share in the control of Church affairs.

"Such a reform as this would, in our opinion, find a cordial welcome from clergymen and laymen of all schools of theology in the Church of England, and from the nation at large. It would do no injury to the organisation which the Church has inherited from earlier ages, but would rather bring that organisation into fuller and more salutary activity; while it would enable provision to be made for meeting with greater elasticity the growing needs of the time."

II. Rev. Main S. A. Walrond's Address.

Extracted from *The Guardian* of Dec. 16th, 1885. (P. 1910).

"To his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and his Grace the Lord Archbishop of York.

"We, the undersigned clergy of the Church of England, desire respectfully to express to your lordships our feeling that the question of Church Reform has become one of pressing urgency, and to beg that, in the interests of the nation, you will take such steps as may seem best to forward legislation on the subject as early as possible in the coming Parliament.

"The reforms which are most pressing are, in our opinion these:—

"1. To give a clearly defined share to the laity, by means of parochial councils and otherwise, in the administration of Church affairs.

"We are aware that a movement in the direction of lay co-operation, initiated by the Convocation of the province of Canterbury in 1870, has made in recent years, and with the hearty approval of your lordships, some progress by means of ruridecanal, diocesan, and provincial conferences. But though parochial councils were, equally with the other bodies above named, recommended by Convocation, little or nothing has been done towards their formation. It appears to us that the establishment of parochial councils, or of some such bodies, with well-defined statutory powers, is of primary importance, as tending in the most effectual way to increase the local interest of the laity in Church affairs, and to stimulate and maintain in them a feeling that the National Church is theirs, and that they have a responsible share in its life.

"2. To reform Church patronage, so as to put an end to the traffic in livings, and to secure that no one be appointed to a living without previous consultation of the parishioners or their representatives.

"With respect to these points, the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1884 on the Church Patronage Bill appears to us to be of great value. We would venture to express our hope that your lordships may be willing to promote a Bill which shall give legal effect to those of its resolutions which prohibit the sale of next presentations and, except to public bodies, of advowsons; as well as to those which give to the parishioners the power

of objecting to the presentee, and which propose to define more clearly the power of the Bishop to refuse to institute.

"3. To provide further security against ministerial inefficiency, from whatever causes it may arise.

"The Pluralities Acts Amendment Act of last Session will, we believe, be useful in this direction; but we are of opinion that greater power and facility should be placed in the hands of the Bishop (if deemed necessary, supported by assessors) to remove incompetent and criminous clerks.

"4. To reduce the anomalies of the present distribution of the endowments of the Church.

"Though much has been already done in this direction, further readjustment is, we believe, needed to meet the changed character of many localities and the shifting of population.

"5. So far to relax the Act of Uniformity as to make it lawful to hold in our churches a greater variety of services, according to the needs and circumstances of the population in different parishes and districts.

"There are other questions of grave importance on which many Churchmen hold strong convictions. As, however, there is not the same unanimity concerning these questions, we desire to confine this memorial to the points mentioned above; but most respectfully and most earnestly we appeal to your lordships to use the weight of your high authority in favour of such reforms as we have indicated, believing that they cannot be delayed without detriment to the Church's influence and hindrance to her usefulness. We do so in the sincere belief that this expression of our opinions will not be unwelcome or altogether valueless. If you should be enabled to set on foot such a body of reforms, we feel assured that your work will meet with the grateful recognition of the nation."

Form for Signature.

I agree with the general purport of the address, and will allow my name to be affixed as a signatory.

Name .....

Benefice or office in the Church.....

Address .....

It is requested that replies be sent to the Rev. Main S. A. Walrond, the Charterhouse, London, E.C.

Enclosure.

Extracts from the report of the Committee on the Church Patronage Bill, giving the resolutions alluded to in the address:—

"That the sale of next presentations be prohibited."

"That, if a fair method of compensation be adopted, the sale of advowsons be prohibited, with certain limitations."

"That the limitations shall be such as not to prevent the sale to some . . . . public patron or set of trustees not having the power of sale."

"That in all cases, before the institution of a presentee to a living, public notice be given to the parishioners, and the parishioners shall have sufficient opportunity of submitting to the Bishop any objections felt within the said parish to the appointment of the presentee."

"That the power of the Bishop to refuse to institute, on the ground of unfitness in point of age or want of proper testimonials, be made clear."

Enclosure 2.

"A. As paragraph '1' has been thought by some persons to insist on the compulsory and immediate formation of some particular type of parochial council in every parish, it may be right to state that this was not the meaning of those who drew up the address.

"B. The designation 'parochial council' was adopted as having been used in Convocation, and by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his late Charge. The question of the qualification of members of such councils was deliberately excluded from the address, and it has been signed both by those who think that it is necessary that all members of parochial councils should be declared Churchmen, and those who feel there will be grave difficulty in excluding churchwardens and others who have at present statutory or customary parochial rights."

III. The Manifesto of Conforming and Non-Conforming Ministers.

Extracted from *The Guardian* of Jan. 6th, 1886. (P. 27.)

"Three centuries ago the Church of England was reformed, to suit the needs of those times. To suit present needs there must be a fresh Reformation.

"Disestablishment and disendowment have been offered as the best mode of bringing the Church of England into harmony with the altered conditions of national life. Against this course we, the undersigned, Conforming and Non-conforming ministers, protest. We hold that disestablishment should not come till all efforts at reform have failed. We believe that one result of disestablishment would be either to secularise cathedrals and churches which are hallowed by the whole religious history of the nation, or to hand them over, with their endowments, to the clergy—a body of men whose tendency it is to prefer their own ecclesiastical system to the interests of the whole people.

"We would, therefore, declare our united opinion that the Church ought to be so reformed as to become once more, in fact as well as in name, the Church of the nation; that, in view of this great object, the endowments of the Church ought to remain sacred to religious uses; the people to have a voice in the election of its ministers, in the control of its funds, and in the arrangement of its services; and the basis of the Church to be so widened as to include, as far as possible, the entire Christian thought and life of the nation.

"The Church of England would thus be nationalised, while its ancient parochial organisation would be preserved for promoting, what all the Churches alike aim at, the spread of true religion among the people."

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